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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on case studies of eight student teachers in Andalusia (Spain) intended to identify and understand the development of their pedagogical approach and the factors affecting their socialization processes. Five factors affecting the socialization of students during practical training were evident in all the cases. These factors were: the pressures of school and classroom culture, feelings of dependence and insecurity arising from the provisional nature of their position, lack of theoretical/practical alternatives to the methods being used in their practicum situation, the evaluation process, and the relationship between the tutor and the student teacher. In the case studies investigated, the interventions of the university supervisor did not offer opportunities or conceptual instruments for analyzing the educational value of the practical work. With regard to the practicum, a marked discrepancy was evident between the opinions of student teachers and those of researchers. Students considered the period of practical work the most important part of their training curriculum. The case studies and other related research indicate, however, that indiscriminate and ill-prepared practical training, without appropriate links between theory and practice, often leads to a rapid and premature socialization linked with undesirable and outdated methods of working and conceiving educational activity. (Contains 13 references.) (ND)

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Profesional socialization of student teachers*

ED 410 190

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The práctical training of teacher

This article summarises the conclusions of the case-studies of the practical experience of eight student teachers in Andalusia, (Spain), aming to identify and understand the development of their practical pedagogic approach and the factors affecting their socialization processes.

the research programme had the following research objectives:

- To describe the practical teacher-training from each student teacher's viewpoint and from the viewpoints the professional training personnel involved in the planning and carrying out of teacher training.

- To identify and analyse those factors which have influenced the professional socialization of the student teachers, and to understand better the complex process of socialization to which student teachers are exposed.

- To analyse the significance and effects on the students of the period of practicum to determine how we might develop a more effective relationship between theory and practice for future teacher-training programmes.

- To identify and discuss how the practical thinking of the students evolved during the period of practical training: this analysis embraces practical knowledge and intervention in the classroom, it takes into account; behaviour, attitudes, motivation, beliefs, and explicit and implicit theories, etc.

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* Derived from the multi-case study of the research programme financed by CYCIT. Project . . . Report Nº 8. The following investigators participated in the case study work: *Carmen Rodríguez Martínez, Juan Pérez Rios, M. Dolores Díaz Noguera, M. Dolores González, M. Luisa Fernández Serrat, Marina, Pilar Sepulveda, Rocío Anguita.*

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Professional socialization Factors during practical training.

Across the range of cases, there were many different factors which significantly affected the socialization of students in the professional teaching culture. However, while it should be noted that their effects tend to differ from case to case, in terms both of intensity and of importance, some factors emerge as the most influential and persistent in all cases:

— The pressure of the school and classroom culture to which trainees have to adapt if they wish to survive with a certain degree of success during this period ot training.

— The evaluation aspect of academic and professional acquisitions made during the period of practice within the teachers' training curriculum.

— Personal insecurity with regard to the mastery of a complex, alien medium and the fear that trainees will not be respected as teachers or that they may be perceived as students.

— The lack of informative, diversified theoretical/practical references by which to judge what they observe and experience.

— The socializing function of the tutor and the bureaucratic function of the supervisor in most of the teacher training programs

It would appear that the whole of the structure built up around the period of practical training induces the reproduction of dominant forms of teaching behaviour and styles in each particular scenario. But we may now proceed in stages and take a more detailed look at each of the factors.

- School culture

When they enter a class, trainee teachers do so as new elements within a microculture whose rules and climate are already set. If they wish to be accepted, they have to adapt to the normal rules of the game already approved by tradition, which they have in no way helped to establish. They have to adapt to the various relationships, to the teaching rhythm and dyn amics of the class and to the teaching style of the teacher in charge, so as to make sure that their admission does not give rise to conflict or to any in terruption in the normal rhythm. The school and classroom culture is a powerful socialization factor involving many agents, such as the teaching staff, students, parents, the organization of space and time, curricular materials and general social expectations. The effect of all these influences is to reinforce the tendency towards imitation and reproduction of the status quo, as a means of preserving the delicate balance which the institution has achieved throughout its existence.

"On entering the third-year elementary school classroom the teacher-in-charge indicates to the student-teacher the task to be carried out and she does nothing more than imitate the classroom activities of the teacher-in-charge so that the student carries out exactly the same task. This is supposed to prevent her from being confronted with unfamiliar situations that would make her uncomfortable or insecure. In this way the student enjoys a feeling of being in control because she understands just what is occurring at this time; it is familiar because the teacher-in-charge has demonstrated the same thing before." (Jaen)

She is aware, but from the second week we observed that the students control behaviour in the classroom is a faithful reproduction of the tutor teacher-in-charge, even though she knows and considers it useless. . . "This has to be learned for when you might be Teach ; at the beginning, when they note that they cannot fool around with you, and then later more calmly" (EP 2, pages.2 to 4). I only foresaw the possibility that the classroom indiscipline might have been caused by the teacher herself/himself at the start of practice (EP1, p. 15). With time, the student didn't attribute the disturbances to the teacher-in-charge. In the reports and practice diaries Lucía describes occasions when punishment was carried out by the tutors and considers them justified . . . A little later, she punishes for the first time without a single thought about discipline and excusing herself by quoting orders from above . . . Once she had taken this first step, she describes in her second-year diary the type and moment of punishment she carried out quite normally. She used the very same method as the tutor staff." (Córdoba).

It is clear, and this appears explicitly in most cases, that the agent most directly involved in this socialization process is the tutor teacher, both on account of the relationship which trainees establish with him/her, and because he/she is the closest purveyor and defender of the patterns of behaviour required by the school culture. The pressure exerted by the school environment and by the institutional culture, as basically transmitted by the tutoring staff, is so strong that some trainee teachers even react defensively against any attempts at analysis or critical observation by a supervisor or researcher. Similarly, it is worth noting that even some of the researchers who have been involved in activities in the course of these case studies have been aware of succumbing to unwanted pressures arising from this scenario.

"The influences of the tutor teacher even reached me (the researcher) during emergency situations like, for example, finishing the decoration, or staying with the class when a child became ill etc. . . These situations were rare, but in them I did the same as Mar, but not at all as well. I used more authority to keep the class quiet than the students in practice." (Granada).

"On the other hand, we understood the ease with which the students in practice, and even the researcher, adapted to classroom routines. At times I surprised myself adopting certain attitudes and behaviour that were closer to the dynamics and subculture of the classroom than my own beliefs and ideas." (Almería,).

A further aspect to be considered regarding the socializing pressures brought to bear by the school's cultural and professional environment —apart from the assimilation, by observation, of the teaching styles exhibited and frequently imposed by the tutoring staff— is the acceptance of the forms of pedagogic behaviour which are considered legitimate within the establishment as a whole. These routine forms of behaviour are usually propagated to the exclusion of any alternatives, especially of an innovating kind, since these would threaten the reproductive equilibrium and will be doomed to failure on the grounds that they are sterile, pernicious or lacking in the necessary realism.

"Mari-Angeles" observed that the teacher-tutors who tried to change something or introduce something new were disapproved of. This referred to leaving early the school on Friday afternoon, for example. (Málaga).

Lastly, we should emphasise that the satisfactory personal and social relations that students-teacher established with the children they work with became a reinforcing factor of the behaviour adopted towards the school culture. The pleasure the student derived from the pupils' affection made them defer their duty to ask more demanding questions about the quality of their teaching.

- Dependence and insecurity.

Another decisive factor in the socialization of future teachers during their period of practical work is the dependent, provisional nature of their position within a complex environment of social exchanges which affect all those involved, especially the trainee teacher, whose situation is so uncertain and un stable.

"The value judgement that our subject made of the practice period in which he has just participated is that it was not entirely worthwhile because at no time did the subject feel himself to be a teacher of the school. This idea was insistently repeated throughout our conversation. During the practical period the subject felt himself to be only an assistant to the tutor teacher-in-charge, or a substitute, a part-timer without overall responsibility for the process in which he was involved." (Málaga)

Both the tutor's attitude and the personal feeling of insecurity of the student doing practical work when confronted with a group of students —added to the latter's expectations, for opportunities to disturb the normal course of academic events— combine and reinforce the attitude of submission and dependence which we observed in most of the trainee teachers in the case studies.

Most of the time, a student-teacher's refuge or way out of this situation of personal insecurity and extreme dependence on the tutor consists, as we found, in imitating and reproducing the behaviours he observes in the tutor's teaching style, which appear to be successful in the complex human scenario of social and academic interrelationships. Attempting to direct the life of the classroom from a clear position of institutional and professional inferiority logically encourages styles of behaviour which over-compensate in terms of authority.

"Within the classroom, discipline will occupy most of Mar's time, she has to make sure the pupils keep quiet, do not interrupt, and stay in their places. She will have to insist on silence in such a way that anyone in the corridor will not know that the class is out of control without the tutor teacher . . . In very few days, Mar will change her idea about establishing good relations with the pupils to concentrating more on control and discipline . . . This change evolved as much from the direct advice of Concha, her tutor teacher, as from her own observation" (Granada).

One curious exception to this pattern of dependence and subordination in relation to the tutor, induced and practically demanded both by the school culture and by the

students' own feeling of insecurity, happened in Seville. Luis, the selected trainee teacher, was a specialist in physical education, and as such appeared to be better equipped in terms of theoretical knowledge and practical skills than his tutor. Physical education is a relatively new area in our education system, like music, so that a student teacher's training tends to be more thorough than that of the tutor's, which makes it difficult to establish the usual relations of powerful dependence and hierarchy. The trainee teacher feels more secure and knowledgeable in the absence of close supervision by a specialized tutor. He can therefore allow himself more open and decisive attitudes in experimenting with alternatives and new ideas, and can judge himself whether they work.

- Lack of theoretical/practical alternatives

The influence of the immediate school environment proves to be much more decisive when no theoretical/practical alternatives, which could be used on such occasions, have ever been offered or assimilated in the school environment or in previous academic training. It is easy to prove that the students imitate the teacher not only because of the pressure on them to adapt, but also because they lack other more appropriate teaching methods because their course work in the university teacher-training school did not explicitly link theory with practice.

> " This is particularly evident in the case of Mathematics, the student-teacher decided not to participate in the classes of this subject, "because I knew that I had insufficient didactical knowledge in mathematics. Certainly, I didn't know how to begin teaching it . . ." . He continues, " The only thing I know about this is the fruit of my observations of the teacher tutor's classes; we could say that I learned more in five weeks than in the nine months I studied that subject." (Cadiz).

The theory inculcated at university in previous years turns out to be generally too far removed, in terms of time and interest, to be resorted to as a helpful reference area, or a store of useful knowledge and experience with which to understand current reality and to guide on-the-spot decisions. Any interaction between training, practice and tutored reflection during the period of practical work is, as we mentioned earlier, practically non-existent. On the part of university supervisors and co-ordinators of practical work, there is generally a lack of any proper monitoring of the students' efforts at observation, inquiry and reflection, which might enable the latter continuously to review their practical work in the light of advice regarding the real difficulties inherent in the complex school environment. The absence of any interesting, reflectively assumed alternatives then becomes a powerful factor of socialization, abandoning the trainees to the obvious tendencies which encourage the reproduction of the conventional standards established in the school environment.

> " Even at the beginning of his practical work the student is sceptical about the ideas and concepts taught in the teacher-training school. His first contacts with the reality of the school and after hearing the opinions of his tutor-teachers lead them to think of them as useless. This critical attitude is not a personal criticism of his teachers or of the teacher-training school, but rather a defense of their practical work; in effect, they are saying, without understanding the aphorism,

"Experience is the mother of Science." This misconception is particularly dangerous because they refer not to their individual teaching methods based on carefully considered personal experience, but to the practical experience of their tutor-teachers: experience that is all too often based on unthinking routine and which the student teachers emulate directly" (Granada).

Furthermore, the tutors in general act not only as the guardians of continuity in the professional and institutional culture of the school, defining what is right in practice, but also frequently pouring scorn on both other pedagogic alternatives and even the validity of 'theoretical' university studies in the eyes of students undergoing practical training. As a result, the horizon of the generation of knowledge, habits and attitudes closes in on itself within the shrunken scenario of repetitive experience.

- Evaluation

Most of the researchers in this field hold the firm view, which they have expressed in the case studies we are commenting upon here, that the evaluatory aspect of the period of practical training is one of the factors which has most influence on the socialization of future teachers. If the school environment, with its institutional and professional culture, and the tutor's thoughts and actions exert so much influence on the trainee teacher's ways of feeling, thinking and acting, it is to some extent because they constitute the judges and censors of success in the learning process.

As we had occasion to note, future teachers set a high priority on establ ishing a close working relationship with their tutor, on accepting the classroom and school dynamic, and on avoiding confrontations or threatening the status quo, because in this way they hope successfully to pass the test of their practical work in their academic curriculum.

"The lady tutor-teacher has more power and influence in the teaching activity environment. Although you are given the freedom to act, the female student teacher reproduces the schematics of the instructive sequence , but does not inhibit her own attitudes and approach to the children (her character is different from that of the tutor) . . . She is aware of her imitative behaviour and tries to eliminate it, but the tendency to adopt routine is now firmly established and she fears making mistakes: she must do things that she thinks are inappropriate, or risk the disapproval of the tutor and this is more imperative than her wish to innovate (Almería)

- The socializing function of the tutor and the bureaucratic function of the supervisor

Nevertheless, despite all that may be said about the socializing effect of the tutor's influence on trainee teachers, the relationships established between them will tend to differ considerably and give rise to different results according to the personalities of the parties involved and the way they look upon this period of training and the mutual acceptance of their respective roles. It is safe to say that in most cases the socializing tendency, stimulated and encouraged by the tutor, has been conservative.

The practising student, however, tended to react very differently according to the type of relationship established.

> "In effect, there is little real contact with the tutor-teacher and even less with the supervisor, and practically none with the rest of the teaching staff." (Cádiz).
>
> "At all times, the lady tutor assumed the rôle of teacher of the student-in-practice and, consequently, their personal relationship outside classroom activities was very poor. Perhaps, this was one reason why the practice-period was not more integrated into the overall educational mission, and why, apparently, the student showed little enthusiasm to take the initiative." (Huelva).
>
> "The lady tutor-teacher never discussed the work and her educational obligation towards the student-techer, in fact, it appeared that she limited her tutorial activity to simply lending a space in her classroom and allowing the daily classroom "activity" to take place before the eyes of any student, or students-techaer that she, might have under her care that year. In Lucia's second practice period the different rôle s played by her tutors during her teaching practice caused her to define her emotions at that time as feeling "out-of-place", "alone", "indifferent", "confused". (Córdoba).

All the above evidence only confirms once again the low importance of actual educational content in the relationship between the tutor and the student teacher. We find a significant, powerful socializing influence in combination with the school culture to which they belong, but none of the case studies reflects the existence of an educational relationship, where the tutor systematically develops and performs a role of reflective mediation, stimulating student-teachers to analyse and compare the influences and tendencies to which they are exposed and which are the natural components of teaching activity. These relationships clearly encourage the reproduction of modes of conduct generated by the school culture, which are traditionally and routinely repeated from year to year, and from one school to another. Practical work is considered to be an instrument of training not because it induces a mimetic reproduction of conventional behaviour, but because it all ows the possibility of knowing, comparing, questioning, reflecting and choosing. In the light of the case studies, the conclusion we have to come to, therefore, is that practical work and, more concretely, the tutor's influence only very rarely extend beyond the task of socialization, thus practically failing to stimulate any educational comparison of shared reflection and innovative experimentation.

It may be that, in the theoretical design of practical work and in the meaning and function of the part played in it by the different agents invol ved, the role of the university supervisor fulfils or should fulfil this job of achieving a critical detachment and reflective mediation serving to offset and compensate the powerful socializing influence of the school environment. In fact, in the case studies investigated, this function also failed to emerge at all clearly. Neither the theory assimilated in the course of previously or simultan eously studied disciplines, nor the direct and systematic intervention of the supervisor were able to offer any opportunities or conceptual instruments for analysing the educational value of practical work or the personal or shared reflection offsetting the inertia of the institutional dynamic. In most cases, the intervention of the supervisor was

irrelevant in this sense, and was restricted merely to recording and checking the fulfilment of the bureaucratic requirements of the practical programme for the purposes of final assessmen t. Whether on account of disenchantment resulting from earlier experience, or to a poor appreciation of the educational value of this period, or due to habits acquired at university, where this period of training tends to be looked down upon academically, the fact is that the supervisor's influence is unable to offset the powerful socializing effect of the student's experience. The supervisor's attitude in general tends to be either indifferent or bureaucratic, or supportive of the socializing experience of practical work.

> "The supervisor played no active rôle during Luis' practice period. Luis knew his name, but had no contact with him either during or after his practice. The teacher-training school considered his contribution to be very negative because his task was simply to indicate the type of report he wanted and to grade it. '. . . he came for five minutes, arrived and said that he might go and do something in the first class. Five minutes, that was all. Better not come at all. It would have been better not to come than to come out of obligation. Let's not kid ourselves, his work was nil.' ". (Sevilla).

> "The practicals were less important for the supervisors than any other subject they taught us; they use them to fill in free time" . . . "They are unimportant for two reasons: they are too short and the supervisors neither take them seriously nor carry out their supervisory duties." (Almeria)

> " The supervisors do not want to visit the schools or colleges and argue that the students-teacher go to them as a favor, and they consider themselves as guests. . . For Mar and the three students-in-practice in Human Sciences, who were doing their practicum in the same primary school, their supervisor organised the meetings every two weeks, only because he was obliged to do so, but really he had little interest: 'She was totally uninterested in the practice periods she was tutor by obligation' — Mar commented to me — Some students-in-practice said that their supervisor gave them a telephone number in case they might have problems, and then forgot them. . . Something similar occurred in the Human Science tutorials, Mar told me the tutor spoke very little about the practicals. The supervisor asked if they had had any problems, and as they had not had any, she explained history to them. This is the general way many supervisors act." (Granada).

A reflective appraisal of practice requires investigating the effects the training is having on the students' thought, feelings and conduct, by encouraging students in the course of individual or group tutorials to express what they have experienced in their period of practical work, to comment on differences and to analyse its implications, and by facilitating contact with alternative pedagogical practices different from those experienced in the concrete, limited area of the actual establishment where the training is taking place. The function normally served by seminars in terms of debate, communication, analysis of problems, stimulation of queries and consideration of alternatives, which should be the main responsibility of the university supervisor, does not appear as such in any of the case studies investigated. This means that the practical work is more than likely to be lacking in any research element and tends to reproduce itself mechanically, thereby losing its educational potential. The task of supervising practical work, as we saw in the other reports and as was confirmed in the case studies, has become a routine, bureaucratic task, of little academic value, which can be performed by any member of staff in

addition to their teaching activity, regardless of training or motivation. Neither the administration nor the actual university attribute to it the importance it deserves.

The meaning of practicum in teacher training.

It is interesting to note the marked discrepancy between the opinions of student-teachers doing practical work and those of researchers regarding the educational function of that period of training.

There is no doubt that, as far as the majority of students doing practical work are concerned, and this was true for all our case studies, the period of practical work is considered, with greater or lesser enthusiasm, as the most important part of their training curriculum. It is seen as the real part of the curriculum, where they have the opportunity not only to come to grips with the true nature of their profession, its possibilities and limitations, but also to develop the knowledge, techniques, attitudes and behaviours which they can use in their future jobs. But, what is perhaps most important, it is the period when they have a chance to find out whether they themselves are really suited to the profession, and whether the profession is really suited to them.

> "I saw it as a complementary part of the study programme, as much for what one learns ("one learns techniques or one is obliged to seek them out") ... as for being a testing-time like that undergone by doctors and nurses in which they see blood and guts for the first time. That is to say it involves contact, not with reality, but something more realistic than that we had in the teacher-training school". (Cádiz,).

> "For this female student, the practicals constituted the most attractive phase of her training, "in which one can apply the knowledge and ideas learned during the three previous courses and dedicate oneself to a career as a primary school teacher. . . " "I learned a lot, it helped me a lot". . . "As I learned in the practice period". . . "Now I have learned something". . . "Theory is useful, but . . . practice is something else' . . . "Now I know that I can be a good teacher" . . . "You start with fear, well, you don't know how you will manage, if you will be capable of dealing with all the situations that might occur, or, something more important; if you are really suitable for the profession of school teacher that you chose". . . (Almería)

> ". . .A weight equal to 99% of the Teaching Course, that is to say, it should be given a larger number of credits than is assigned in the Study Programme, because its objective is to develop the student by live experiences; to learn and see the world of teaching as it really is. What I am really going to find in the classroom, more than the pupils, is myself." . That is to say the student began to "feel like a Teacher", to adopt the specific attitudes and values which one only observed as a mere spectator." (Huelva)

> "Throughout the interviews conducted in the first phase of the research, all the persons involved in the practicals in the Teacher-training School expressed the opinion that the practicals should be the most important subject (discipline) of the course and that they should have all the necessary infrastructure." (Jaen)

> "For Lucía, the most important part of her training process in the University Teacher-training School were the practicals, the rest was 'theory' . . . In spite of the fact that she considered this period as basic to her training she did not know the practical training programme of the University centre . . . The students-in-practice as well as their tutorial staff considered the

period of teaching practice as the most important and necessary phase of the educational process." (Córdoba)

This perception of the practicum as the key component of their professional training does not, generally speaking, entail contempt for or a rejection of the theoretical training they received at university, but more a reaffirmation of a technical conception of the relation between theory and practice. Classroom work is appreciated as an opportunity to check the validity of theoretical principles in practice, to complete previously acquired knowledge, to fill in the gaps and to select or reject aspects of theoretical training which appear unconnected and sterile when the time comes to understand and solve everyday problems. In the end, practice is the seal and crucible of theory. Nevertheless, there is a widespread feeling, encouraged by most tutors, of a lack of continuity between university theory and classroom practice, as well as a hint of contempt and disparagement for theory —not only for bad theory— and of the shortcomings of its application in practice, and even of the need for and usefulness of theoretical training.

"The first impression, or the misconception, that students-in-practice have is that all that was imparted in the Teacher-training School is no use at all. This leads to their feeling that they have been deceived because, well, the practicum are left to the last part of the teaching course and you must wait until the third year to discover — according to what they tell me — " what being a teacher is all about, " and then doubt their choice of career. The practicum as direct contact with reality are a crucially important part of their professional training" (Cordoba)

This perception of the greater importance which should be attached to the practical as compared with the theoretical component of the professional training of future teachers does tend, however, to become mitigated as the practical work continues and the students become better acquainted with the routines, the repetition and the sheer boredom of practice where there is little room for innovation. The traditional, routine nature of most of the teaching styles met with by students in their practical work, combined with the often bureaucratic, administrative, evaluative character of the practical component of some university programmes, leads inevitably to discouragement and fatigue when practical work goes on without any innovations. Thus, as we found in the case studies, future teachers, once they have overcome their initial surprise and the illusion of entering into contact with professional practice, begin to experience fatigue and disappointment caused by the monotony of the way of working in school, which is by no means unusual and which is boring for both students and teachers. These are established styles within the school tradition, in the face of which the future teachers, con sidering their provisional and dependent status, feel powerless and make no attempt to change.

"At the end of the practicum their initial enthusiasm had evaporated and they expressed the boredom of the final days of teaching practice. 'I was bored, always the same thing, the same methods. . . a pain in the neck' (EP 5, page 13) . . . The routine. Too much time and always repeating the same thing, you get tired. Yo don't know what to observe. You say, 'well, OK. we'll do it the same old way." (Córdoba).

Logically, in a situation where practical work is seen purely in opposition to theory, or as the imitative acquisition of traditional habits, techn iques and routines used

successfully by experienced teachers to govern the l ife of the classroom, the students' experience in this period will be no more or less interesting than the practice applied by these teachers. If this consists basically in traditional routines and simple repetitive patterns of behaviour, then the outcome can only be weariness and boredom.

Yet, let us inquire a little further: what was really learned during the period of practical work in the case studies considered?

All the evidence we were able to gather appears to show that practical training serves to acquire the practical knowledge, techniques and strategies, together with the attitudes and behaviours, required by the dominant school culture. The student-teacher learns to relate to other teachers and to pupils, l earns to master the classroom dynamic, learns to become a professional with the right attitudes and responsibilities for the task as defined in practice by the majority of teachers, and learns the language of the profession. In other words, he/she assimilates and assumes the predominant teaching role in our school culture. That is also to say that beginning teachers recover the memory of the school culture they experienced as a pupil—from the other side. This is why this training period appears so easy and so effective, because in fact the trainees are socialized in the same culture as they themselves experienced for at least fifteen years of their lives.

The great weakness of practical training becomes evident when this period is expected to provide a fundamental component of the reflective train ing of the teacher as an intellectual investigating the conditions prevailing in the scenario where they have to act; or when student-teachers are expected to develop strategies adapted to the reality they are experiencing, evaluating and reformulating in the light of analysis and on-going exchanges with the others involved; or when the future professional is supposed to be able to investigate the meaning of education in the modern world and to test the significance of his/her practical work for future generations .

One may even go so far as to assert, in the light of these arguments, that in this sense practical training becomes more of an obstacle than a tool in the education of future teachers. Considering that neither the colleges nor the tutors are selected for the quality of their practical work, trainees are generally socialized according to a pedagogic culture dominated by reproduction, which induces, stimulates and sometimes imposes the imitation of traditions as a legitimate form of professional learning. The effect of imitation is to inhibit and remove reflection from the field of thought and action of future teachers. The status quo is accepted, while innovations are rejected and denigrated as potential threats to the precarious balance achieved by the school tradition. For this reason, when the trainees were asked if they were satisfied with what they had learned in the course of their practical training, whether they had assimilated what they had undoubtedly learned, which must have been new compared with their previous experience as students in different parts of the education system or as university students already studying education, they were unable to give a definite answer.

"In the case of the girl student observed, the practical training period appeared to have been an important factor in the conditioning of her professional behaviour and attitudes. In some other cases, however, it only reinforced pre-existing behaviour, while in others, it created a traditional style of thinking about teaching practice that above all, conformed very closely to that of the tutorial staff and appeared to imitate their thinking. (Córdoba)

Thus even on the assumption that the theoretical/practical training of teachers must take place in the school, in the actual situation where pedagogic values and procedures are generated and transformed, we agree with Beyer (1988), Munro (1989), Hoy & Woolfolk (1990), Staton & Hunt (1992), Smith (1992), MacDonald (1984), Elliott (1991) and Zeichner (1992) Pérez Gómez (1987, 1992), recalling the risk involved in succumbing to the powerful socializing influence exerted by the educational establishment. As the above authors have shown, the indiscriminate and illprepared development of practical training, merely as a way of introducing future teachers to the school environment and culture, has all too often led to a rapid and premature socialization linked with undesirable and outdated methods of working and conceiving educational activity. This tends to occur as a result of the inertia of schools in reproducing and perpetuating teaching strategies which are consistent with the school's own social, professional and institutional expectations, and at the same time of the reasonable desire of student-teachers and new teachers to develop successfully and to become socially accepted by their colleagues. In effect, practical work in itself encourages an understandable tendency to imitate and reproduce the type of social and professional behaviour which is believed to be that of the majority —and the apparently successful— within the social environment of the classroom and school.

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